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Exploring qualitative approaches to assessing change in Organisational Development Programmes

A 'think piece' commissioned by WWF UK

A framework Collaboration

EXPLORING QUALITATIVE APPROACHES TO ASSESSING CHANGE IN ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

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1. Introduction

This paper was commissioned by WWF UK to contribute to their thinking about how best to monitor and evaluate organisational development (OD) initiatives. Initially written for an internal WWF audience, the original think piece has been redrafted for a wider readership.

1.1. Context

A key component of WWF-UK's present Strategic Plan is to invest in the Organisational Development (OD) of key WWF partner offices so that they become more relevant, capable and influential (Strong Offices), and can thereby contribute to greater conservation impact.

In this context, WWF refers to organisational development as being the strategic and transformational process which supports and enables a WWF organisation to clarify and achieve its organisational goals. This is part of the overall Truly Global (TG) initiative of the WWF-Network, which is focused on "multiplying our conservation impact; working together across the Network with one voice and building strong, influential offices in the countries that are most important to our mission".

What differentiates the current approach to OD from WWF's historical experience is both (i) the scope and scale of the investment in organisational development and (ii) the ownership and management of the processes. Both aspects demand a more rigorous approach to monitoring, evaluating, and learning processes and practices, and to varying extents WWF has developed – or at the time of this study was in the process of developing – initial monitoring frameworks in support of the change plans of its WWF network partners.

For the most part, these monitoring frameworks have tended to focus on quantitative approaches. Gaining a better insight into qualitative approaches to assessing organisational change has therefore been identified as a key area for learning and exploration, and an opportunity to address this collectively exists as all WWF Networkpartners were to come together in June 2015 for an organisational development workshop.

It is important to note that through this process WWF was looking at the potential to supplement and enhance the existing monitoring frameworks (rather than replace them) and primarily the organisation wished to ensure they were taking advantage of *existing* opportunities to learn (rather than introducing new ones).

1.2. Purpose of this study

The purpose of this study was to:

- Develop a succinct, informative and provocative thought-piece on good practice with respect to qualitative approaches to assessing change in organisational development, in order to
- Provide a stimulus for enhancing and supplementing existing monitoring frameworks.

1.3. Research questions

Using the terms of reference for the study, the following questions were devised to guide the research:

1. What benefits do qualitative approaches have over quantitative approaches concerning the monitoring and evaluation of organisational development/change?
2. How relevant are qualitative approaches to organisational development/change?
3. How have qualitative approaches to monitoring and evaluating organisational development/change been applied by other organisations?
4. What value do these approaches add to the organisations that use them?
5. What challenges are there to using qualitative approaches for monitoring and evaluating organisational development/change
6. What are the key considerations for using qualitative approaches to monitor and evaluate organisational development/change in WWF?

1.4. Methodology

Two main data gathering methods were used for this study:

1. An extensive document study and web search examining: current thinking on these issues in Civil Society and other sectors; documentation from relevant organisations; Framework's own reports and documented experience; and academic studies where relevant.
2. Interviews with four categories of interviewees:
   - WWF staff who provided context and insights into wider issues concerning M&E and organisational development in WWF.
   - WWF staff from the offices that are the focus of the WWF UK support who shared their OD plans, their experiences to date, the challenges they face; and their successes and ideas.
   - Staff from 'peer' organisations dealing with similar issues either internally, with members of their organisational 'family', or with partner organisations who were willing to share their experience and ideas.
   - Recognised experts in the field of OD and M&E – particularly those who had addressed the issue of monitoring and evaluating organisational development.

In addition the researchers posted requests with two online communities concerned with monitoring and evaluation, namely the 'Pelican Initiative: Platform for Evidence-based Learning & Communication for Social Change' (pelican@dgroups.org) and the 'MandE Group' (MandENEWS@yahoogroups.com). These requests generated a small number of interesting responses.

2. Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to thank everyone who contributed directly and indirectly to its development. Particular thanks go to Rod Sterne and Keith Hempshall of WWF UK for commissioning us to carry out this research. It turned out to be a priceless opportunity to look into a neglected topic in some depth and we hope that this and the other accompanying documents will make a contribution not only to WWF's thinking but to OD practice in other INGOs.

We are also indebted to the 21 people who were willing to share their thoughts and insights with us during the interviews we conducted – they are listed in Annex One. We hope we have done justice to their contributions.

3. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Organisational development is the subject of many definitions. Underpinning every definition of OD is an understanding of (i) organisations and how they work, and (ii) the nature of change.

3.1. Understanding organisations

Recent thinking about organisations has had a major influence on the way in which organisational development is now viewed:

- Organisations are complex, adaptive systems - more like organisms or ecosystems than machines.
- Organisations are defined by a complex and unique set of relationships that can be influenced but not controlled.
- Organisations have a powerful unconscious aspect (culture) which shapes their identity.
- All organisations have a unique past and present which help to shape their future.
- Organisations evolve over time through a combination of conscious, planned choices and unplanned and unexpected developments.
- Understanding the organisation's 'life path' lies at the heart of taking a developmental approach to organisations.
- Organisations need to be able to analyse and adapt to their complex and constantly changing environment.
- To fully appreciate an organisation it needs to be seen holistically so an important part of organisational development is to make the organisation more aware of itself

Because organisations are so complex we need conceptual models to help us understand and manage them. There are many such models some of which take a holistic view of the organisation and some that concentrate on specific dimensions such as organisational learning or organisational culture. Among the holistic models most widely used in the NGO world are the INTRAC '3-Circle' and 'onion-skin' models, the 'McKinsey 7-S' model, Bolman and Deal's '4-Box' model and the 'organisational life-cycle' but others such as Weisbord's '6-Box' model and the 'Burke-Litwin' model are also used and adapted by some NGOs and other civil society organisations. WWF has itself devised a 'Strong Office Framework' that can also be seen as a conceptual model for understanding WWF offices.

The importance of these and other models is that they help us to develop a more systematic understanding of the complexity of organisations. By understanding organisations we are in a better position to manage and bring about change in them.

3.2. Organisational change

Current thinking about organisational change challenges the previously dominant view that change is simply a process of 'unfreezing' the organisation from its current state; carrying out a planned changed process; and then 're-freezing' the organisation in its new desired state. This linear view of organisational change is now seen as being inadequate to deal with the complexity of organisations and the dynamic environments in which they operate. Many argue that change has the following characteristics:

- Change is a constant process – it happens whether we like it or not
- Change can be understood but not necessarily controlled
- The consequences of change are not always predictable so accepting uncertainty is crucial
- Learning is central to change
- People are naturally interested in change but often need reassurance and encouragement
- 'Resistance' to change can be useful – it can indicate potential consequences that have been overlooked by those planning the change

A useful distinction can be made between incremental change and transformational change. Incremental change involves taking steps towards a planned goal without questioning the existing strategy or business model. Transformational change involves a shift in organisational culture resulting from a change in the underlying strategy and processes that the organisation has used in the past. A transformational change is designed to be organization-wide and is enacted over a longer period of time.

Some managers view the key distinction between incremental change and transformational change as the scale of the change process. However, a more important way of characterising transformational change concerns the 'depth' of change. In this sense, transformational change "combines inner shifts in people's values, aspirations and behaviors with "outer" shifts in processes, strategies, practices and systems"[1].

In a recent book on the application of chaos and complexity theories to NGOs, Ben Ramalingam[2] describes the potentially profound implications of transformational change:

> "In complex organisations, transformational change ultimately involves the creation of new organisational realities that can break the hold of dominant patterns in favour of new ones, which are not fully within the control of any one group or individual (Ramalingam et al, 2008). These new patterns cannot be precisely defined in advance – it is possible only to nurture elements of the new reality, and create conditions under which the new reality can arise. Of particular importance is the notion that when existing patterns of action are particularly powerful, significant change may not be possible, because the organisation ends up trying to do new things in old ways." [3]

The implications of this view of organisational change are only recently emerging in the literature, but it is clear that organisations aiming for sustainable, transformational change need to be flexible, adaptive, and willing and able to learn from experience, particularly concerning unintended and unexpected outcomes.

3.3. A working understanding of organisational development

Implicit in an organisation's definition of OD is its understanding of how organisations work and the nature of organisational change. This, in turn, determines the organisation's view of what OD should be aiming to achieve and the nature of the organisational development process.

In WWF UK, organisational development is defined as "The strategic and transformational process which supports and enables a WWF organisation to clarify and achieve its organisational goals." This definition emphasises the *strategic* contribution of organisational development to enable an organisation to define and achieve high levels of organisational effectiveness. It also acknowledges the role that organisational development can play in *transforming* an organisation.

A leading OD practitioner defines organisation development in a different way: "How an organisation develops and implements strategy with the full involvement/engagement of its people" (Griffin, 2014 p6-7). This definition, like WWF's, emphasises that organisation development is about the long term performance of the organisation but what makes this definition different from WWF's is that it makes explicit the importance of people and their genuine involvement in decisions and actions that impact on the future of their organisation. Current thinking about organisational development would further reinforce the importance of people because it is through their interaction that meaning and understanding is created from the complexity that characterises organisations.

Current thinking about OD practice identifies five core theoretical roots of OD[4]. These are:

- Systems theory
- Social constructionism / appreciative inquiry
- Action research theory
- Change theories
- Complexity theories

Each of these has powerful influences on the way in which OD is characterised and how it is practised. So, taking two of these 'theoretical roots' as examples, firstly an understanding of systems theory suggests that OD practice should:

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[1] *Senge, Peter (1999) The Leadership of Profound Change in Senge, Peter, et al The Dance of Change, London: Nicolas Brealey, p15.*

[2] *Ramalingam, Ben (2013) Aid on the Edge of Chaos, Oxford University Press*

[3] *Clarke, Paul and Ben Ramalingam, 2008, p40*

[4] *Cheung-Judge, Mee-Yan and Linda Holbeche (2011) Organization Development, London: Kogan Page*

- Clarify the boundaries of the organisational system
- Involve diverse groups to achieve a rich understanding of the organisation
- Involve external stakeholders who view the system from different perspectives
- Build and strengthen linkages between parts of the system

and so on. Likewise, an understanding of social constructionism/appreciative inquiry suggests that OD practice should:

- Recognise that there is no objective reality. Meaning is not a property of objects and events, it is co-created by individuals in dialogue with each other
- Be inclusive - engage with as many people as possible in the system and value the legitimate multiple perspectives they bring to an issue
- Encourage dialogue and story-telling because these not only share perspectives but help people become clearer about what they themselves think
- Appreciate that the act of asking questions and the type of questions asked can have a profound effect on the way people view a situation or change process
- Use non-verbal methods and tools such as Rich Pictures in order to fully engage with individuals' creativity
- Focus on what works and where there is energy for change more than on trying to fix what is broken or problematic.

So, how an organisation views organisational development influences the expectations it has for what OD activities should be aiming to achieve. Importantly, it determines whether OD is always seen as a means to a clearly pre-defined end (*instrumental* OD) or can also be – at least to some extent - an end in itself (*developmental* OD).

This translates into whether the purpose of OD should always be directly related to increasing organisational effectiveness or whether it is legitimate to consider developing other organisational characteristics such as 'well-being', creativity, innovation and adaptability as worthy ends in themselves.

The choices an organisation makes about the purpose of OD will also have implications for the way in which OD is planned and implemented in the organisation. Over recent years, two main 'schools' of OD practice have evolved: Diagnostic OD and Dialogic OD. Diagnostic OD has a long history whereas Dialogic OD has evolved as a result of more recent thinking based on complexity science. Each is based on different sets of assumptions and uses a different (though overlapping) suite of methods and tools. The main characteristics of each school of OD practice are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Characteristics of diagnostic and dialogic OD

Diagnostic OD	Dialogic OD
Change is characterised in a problem-focused way	Change is characterised in a possibility focused way
There is an objective reality that can be discovered	Reality is a socially constructed process
Change results from diagnosing how to realign organisational elements with the demands of the wider environment.	Change results from changing the conversations that create social reality in order to shape new ways of thinking and acting.
Change can be planned.	Change emerges in unexpected ways
Better suited to incremental change processes where the goal of the change can be clearly stated.	Better suited to transformational change where the goal of the change cannot be clearly stated but the direction is clear.
Views change as a project and those tasked with driving the change as project managers.	Views change as a process that cannot be project-managed because of its emergent characteristics.
Change comes about by engaging those who have a stake in the issue	Change comes about by engaging those who care about the issue

By way of summary, Figure 1 illustrates how an organisation's view of organisational development is influenced by its understanding of both organisations and change. The organisation's working definition of OD influences the choices it makes about planning and implementing OD activities – particularly the balance the organisation adopts between using a diagnostic approach and a dialogic approach to OD.

The desired outcome of any OD process is some type of positive organisational change but experience suggests that not all the outcomes of OD processes were planned, intended and expected! How the organisation responds to unplanned, unintended and unexpected changes (which may by no means all be unwelcome) will be dependent in part on its ability to recognise those changes and understand their significance. As we will go on to suggest, the use of qualitative methods for monitoring and evaluating OD enhances that ability.

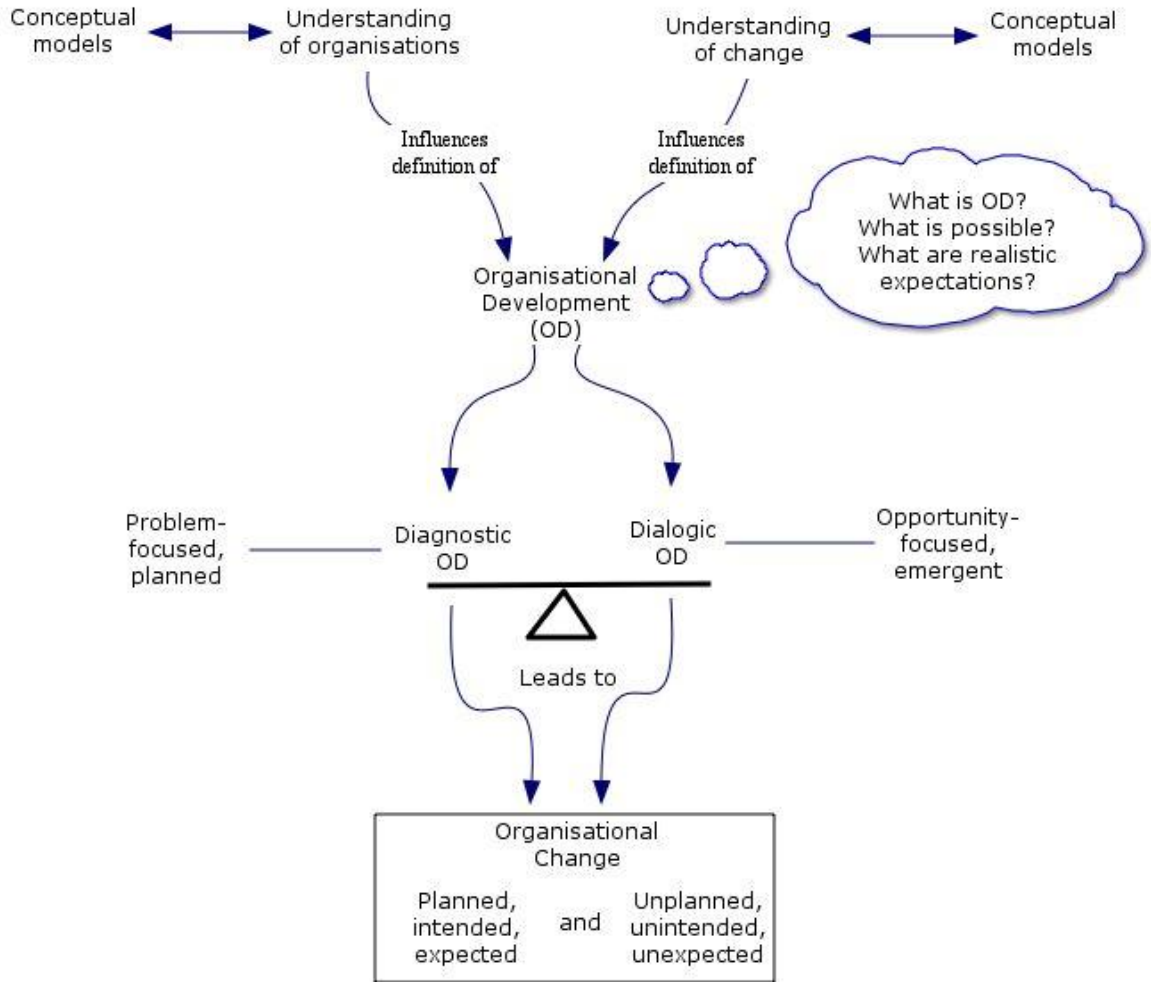

Figure 1: A conceptual map of OD influences and choices

3.4. The contexts of organisational development

Organisational development is an important part of the work of all international NGOs and may occur in three main contexts: (i) within the organisation itself; (ii) as a focus of the support that the organisation provides to other members of its own NGO family; and (iii) in the context of partnerships with external partner organisations.

3.5. Examples of organisational development activities in WWF

Organisational development includes activities ranging in scope from strategic planning, culture change and organisational restructuring, through the development of IT systems, to team-building, leadership development and management coaching. Organisational development is often used to address challenges such as decentralisation, improving intergroup collaboration, strengthening innovation and creativity, building organisational learning capacity, improving staff morale, managing mergers, and bringing about organisational culture change.

The range of activities that falls under the heading of organisational development in the WWF offices is extensive and includes:

- Organisational vision and strategy development
- Organisational assessment e.g. WWF Brazil has used the McKinsey 7-S framework to plan organisational development priority activities
- Development of OD change plans and OD investment plans

- OD monitoring plans
- Development of functional strategies e.g. Human Resources, ITC, Internal Communications
- Strengthening fundraising capacity
- Organisational culture change
- Capacity development (at individual, team and organisational levels) e.g. advocacy capacity; fundraising capacity
- Leadership and management team development
- Talent management and succession planning
- Staff development/training
- Systems development (e.g. performance management system)

Whilst some of these activities may be more straightforward to plan and implement than others, all require an understanding of the complex nature of the organisation within which they are being carried out[5].

[5] *As we shall go on to explore later, even the most straightforward organisational development activities may require the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods to assess their progress and effects.*

4. Theory of Change (ToC) and organisational development

Theory of Change is a concept that is increasingly used in programme design and development. The application of ToC to organisational development is still in its relative infancy but has potential for creating a framework that can assist in monitoring and evaluating OD change processes.

4.1. What is Theory of Change?

A commonly used description of Theory of Change is that it:

> "...defines all building blocks required to bring about a given long-term goal. This set of connected building blocks–interchangeably referred to as outcomes, results, accomplishments, or preconditions is depicted on a map known as a pathway of change/change framework, which is a graphic representation of the change process[6]."

The use of diagrams to represent these connections is a common feature of ToC. Figure is an example of a Theory of Change diagram of a programme to strengthen the capacity of research partner organisations[7]

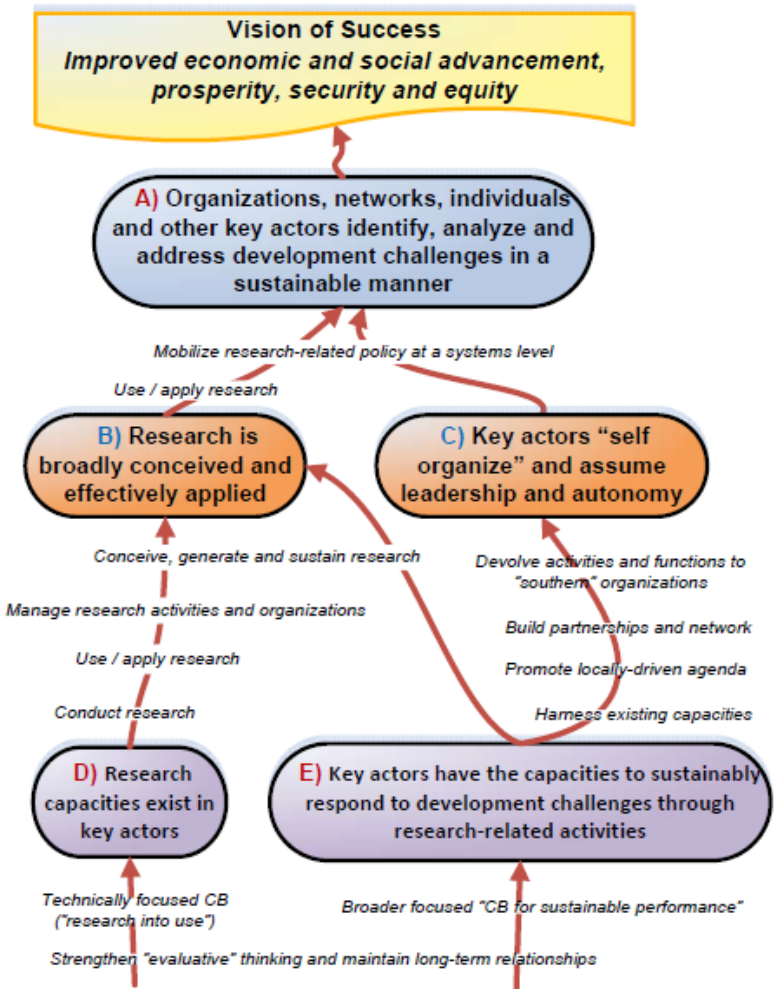

Figure 2: An interpretive theory of change diagram (Ortiz, 2009[8])

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[6] http://www.theoryofchange.org/

[7] *Ortiz, A. (2009). Interpreting Worldviews and Theories of Change on Capacity Development of Social Change Organizations. D Phil Research Outline, Institute of Development Studies.* http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=alfredo_ortiz

In addition, ToC articulates the *assumptions* that stakeholders use to explain the change process represented by the ToC framework. Assumptions explain both the connections between early, intermediate and long term outcomes and the expectations about how and why proposed interventions will bring these changes about. Thus, a TOC establishes a "clear and testable hypothesis about how change will occur."[1]

Increasingly organisations in the international development sector have been using ToC to articulate their vision of what they want to achieve, why and how. A study of the use of ToC in this sector indicated that a number of benefits had been experienced by those organisations that have used ToC for their programmes[9]:

- Developing a common understanding of the work and surfacing any differences.
- Strengthening the clarity, effectiveness and focus of programmes.
- Providing a framework for monitoring, evaluation and learning throughout a programme cycle.
- Improving partnership by identifying strategic partners and supporting open conversations.
- Supporting organisational development in line with core focus and priorities.
- Using theory of change to communicate work clearly to others and as a reporting framework.
- Empowering people to become more active and involved in programmes.

Whilst these benefits refer to the development of ToC with programme activities, it is not difficult to imagine how similar benefits can arise if the ToC concept is applied to organisational development.

4.2. Applying Theory of Change to organisational development

There are two broad approaches to developing ToC:

- One approach focuses on how a project or programme is intended to bring about change and uses this to develop a linear path of cause and effect;
- The other approach explores how change happens in a more general sense and then examines what that means for the role that a particular organisation or programme can play in contributing to a desired change. This usually leads to a more complex web of inter-related interventions

It can be very useful to reflect on the differences between these approaches, particularly when the ToC approach is applied to OD processes. Some *critical questions* in that reflection are:

- How applicable is Theory of Change to change processes within human complex adaptive systems that do not follow a linear cause-effect relationships?
- Is Theory of Change a genuine alternative to log-frames and other logic models or is it simply a repackaging of them? Some theories of change adopt a linear approach to how change happens and not all ToC manage to capture the inter-connections that characterise complex organisational change processes.
- How sensitive is Theory of Change to the issues of context that are crucial to understanding and managing organisational change?
- How well does ToC deal with unexpected or unintended change?

ToC may be useful to frame purposeful organisational strengthening initiatives within the context of the organisation's mission and strategy. However, a ToC needs to avoid becoming a simplistic linear representation of complex change processes.

As one reflective practitioner who has tried to apply ToC to organisational strengthening explained:

> "Reflecting on my experiences, what I have taken from ToC methodology is the value of creating visual aids for mapping change, the value of thinking of change conditions somewhat independently of what a particular organization would like to do, and the importance of discussing assumptions on how people think change occurs." (Ortiz, 2009)

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[8] *Ortiz Aragon, Alfredo (2009) Interpreting Worldviews and Theories of Change on Capacity Development of Social Change Organizations, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex.*

[9] *James, C. (2011). Theory of Change Review for Comic Relief* http://www.theoryofchange.org/pdf/James_ToC.pdf

The following example shows how ToC was used to provide a conceptual framework for a learning review of organisational change interventions:

Example: Using Theory of Change in a review of an organisational strengthening support service

This example has been developed specifically for this paper, based on an ongoing research study commissioned by the umbrella bodies.

Context: Two umbrella bodies offering a number of services and tools aiming to strengthen the effectiveness of member organisations and financially supported by respective governments. These include online OA tools; methodological instruments and support around M&E area; support on transparency initiatives.

Research consultancy established in order to provide learning on contribution to change and also evidence of results of the donor investment. Chosen research method is that of Case Study – 12 organisations.

Decision taken to use a ToC approach to tease out the learning about the contribution of these services and tools to organisational change. This is alongside the assessment of change within each specific organisation.

The Theory of Change: There had been an initial draft of a ToC for these services and tools, and the first activity of the consultancy was to hold a workshop with the clients and further develop the thinking about this. The resulting ToC was expressed in a 'pathway' which illustrated different levels of change emerging from the initial support provision:

- Level 1: the provision and uptake of the services and tools
- Level 2: immediate changes relating from the use of the services and tools, at the level of individuals and organisations
- Level 3: short/medium term changes in the organisations and their relationships
- Level 4: longer term changes that the umbrella bodies hope to influence indirectly
- Level 5: ultimate impact in terms of development outcomes (over which the umbrella bodies have little or no influence)

Testing assumptions: Using a ToC to shape the case studies meant that a key feature of the research was to test out the assumptions behind each level of the change pathway:

- Level 1: that the support offer was made in an appropriate way, enabling the right people to use it at the right time. Also that the members were in a position to access the support at times when they could realistically apply them within their organisations, and had an active culture for learning and improving.
- Level 2: that engagement with the tools and services acts as a motivator in itself for individuals and member organisations to build on their efforts to improve effectiveness. That individuals who engage are motivated and willing to share new learning, and have the capacity/influence to drive change forward within their organisations. That member organisations have capacity to absorb and apply new learning effectively to their programmes and practices, see the value of becoming more transparent and strive to improve their practices and engage in open and useful collaboration with other INGOs and member organisations in relation to thematic areas of intervention.
- Level 3: that member organisations have applied new learning, and programmes and practices have improved accordingly. That increasing numbers of northern NGOs are motivated to improve their practices and effectiveness. That the members apply new learning to/with partners in equitable and useful ways, and see the benefit of including partners' views in PMEL and do so more effectively. That networks of common purpose drive new standards forward and promote them effectively and that collaboration around thematic areas leads to improved effectiveness in programming. Finally, that donors respect and reward evidence of improved effectiveness in INGOs.
- Level 4: that partner organisations in the South have capacity to absorb and apply new learning effectively to their programmes and practices, see the value of becoming more transparent and strive to improve their practices and see the benefit of including beneficiaries' views in PMEL and do so more effectively. That donors continue to use Northern NGOs as a primary vehicle for influencing positive changes for beneficiaries in the South.
- Level 5: that effective CSOs can and do really result in improved quality of life for beneficiaries.

The concerns about taking a 'cause and effect' linear analysis of complex organisational change are present in the use of the ToC in this case. Thus, whilst there are advantages in testing the assumptions outlined above, the learning review must be sure to assess changes in a way which leaves open the opportunity to identify 'emergent' factors contributing to them.

Example developed by B.Lipson – March 2015.

4.3. A 'Theory of Change' for organisational development?

We believe that it is important for organisations to develop an explicit Theory of Change for their OD practice that reflects the complex nature of organisational development and goes beyond linear, cause-effect thinking. A Theory of Change for OD can provide organisations with a conceptual framework that will:

- help managers to appreciate the complex nature of organisational development
- be realistic in their expectations of OD
- make better-informed decisions about investing in OD activities both internally and with their partners
- be better able to monitor progress and evaluate the effects of investments in OD

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATING ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are partly about ensuring accountability for the wise use of resources but also about learning, improving and increasing understanding. Many organisations also emphasise fostering adaptive management involving the use of M&E to support learning.

Monitoring is conducted in order to make sure that the delivery of an intervention is on track. For example, monitoring may include attendance at training courses, production of key documents, and might also capture qualitative feedback from beneficiaries on a regular basis in order to check that things are unfolding as they should. Monitoring data are gathered continuously and reviewed regularly (e.g. weekly or monthly), and it is expected that action would be taken immediately, e.g. by following up on a document which hasn't been produced yet. Monitoring therefore focuses on outputs, and it is very often quantitative or binary (e.g. 'happened/didn't happen').

Evaluation is conducted to see whether the intervention created the change intended (outcomes and impact), though it can also consider effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability of the intervention[10]. **Formative** evaluation can feel a little similar to monitoring, because it is intended to help shape and improve the intervention, whereas **summative** evaluation occurs at the end of an intervention, and aims to say definitively whether change occurred.

5.1. Why monitor and evaluate organisational development?

Before addressing the question 'Why monitor and evaluate organisational development?' it is important to pause and reflect on a wider question – 'What are the purposes of evaluation?' In his influential book 'Utilization-Focused Evaluation', Michael Quinn Patton defines six main purposes for evaluation and identifies the implications of each in terms of primary intended users and what is 'at stake' (see Table 2[11]).

Table 2: The main purposes of evaluation; their primary intended users and what is at stake.

Evaluation purpose	Primary intended users	What's at stake?
Overall judgement – Determine the value and future of the programme	Funders; those with decision-making authority over the future of the programme.	Very high stakes – the future of the programme may be at stake though evaluation findings are rarely the only or even primary basis for such decisions
Learning – Improve the programme.	Programme managers and administrators and those involved day-to-day in the programme implementation.	Moderate stakes – make adjustments, act on feedback; enhance implementation and outcomes.
Accountability – Demonstrate that resources are well-managed and efficiently attain desired results.	Those with executive, managerial, legislative and funding authority and responsibility for stewardship of resources.	High stakes – the more visible the programme, the more political the environment, and the more controversial the intervention, the higher the stakes.
Monitoring – Manage the programme, routine reporting, early identification of problems.	Programme managers who are responsible for the management information systems that feed	Low stakes – ongoing, routine management, alert for bottlenecks and blips in indicators that require

[10] *OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation. Evaluating Development Co-Operation Summary of Key Norms and Standards 2nd Edition* http://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/dcdndep/41612905.pdf

[11] *Patton, Michael Quinn (2008) Utilization-Focused Evaluation, London: Sage, p139*

	internal accountability mechanisms.	attention. Becomes high stakes when used for high level accountability.
Development – adaptation in complex, emergent and dynamic conditions.	Innovators: those involved in bringing about systems change	Low stakes day-to-day as tactical incremental changes are made; high stakes longer term as innovators aspire to bring about major impact.
Knowledge generation – Enhance general understandings and identify generic principles about effectiveness.	Programme designers, planners, theorists, academics and policy makers	Moderate to low stakes – knowledge is accumulated; no single study carries great weight; lessons learned are often in the form of general principles rather than specific recommendations to be implemented immediately

Although the purposes are presented here as being distinct, the reality is that evaluation is often expected to address a cluster of (sometimes mutually incompatible) purposes at the same time. Being clear about the purposes and primary intended users of evaluation, and understanding what is at stake are critical considerations that create the context for deciding how best to address the challenges of evaluation, particularly in the complex field of organisational development.

The scope of the purpose(s) of an evaluation determines the indicators that are used to guide the data collection. If the purpose of an evaluation is primarily concerned with Overall Judgement and Accountability, the indicators are likely to be focused on the value of the programme or activity and the efficient use of resources to achieve the desired results. If the focus of the evaluation is on Learning and Development, the indicators will more likely be related to examining unintended as well as intended effects and to identifying innovative and adaptive capacity.

Despite the technical and political challenges involved in monitoring and evaluating organisational development, there are many benefits that outweigh these problems. Monitoring and evaluating OD is not just about summative judgement or accountability, it should also be about learning, improving and increasing understanding, and the recognition and celebration of success. By monitoring and evaluating OD initiatives the organisation becomes more knowledgeable about what works and what does not in particular circumstances and this, in itself, may enable more prudent or better targeted use of resources.

The following list identifies ten ways in which well-designed evaluation has been recognised to add value to organisational development[12]:

1. Evaluation encourages the organisation to define and refine its Theory of Change for OD.
2. Evaluation planning helps to clarify desired OD objectives and outcomes and also informs the choice and design of interventions.
3. Monitoring and evaluation require the organisation to be specific regarding how certain procedures, events, and activities will be implemented.
4. Monitoring and formative evaluation during an OD intervention help to keep it on track, refocus, reassess possibilities, or spot and act on unexpected results.
5. Monitoring and evaluation can be valuable OD interventions in their own right, reinforcing or complementing the other OD work going on.
6. Evaluation enables learning about how OD interventions impact on the organisation, and how the interventions can be developed or improved.
7. The processes of monitoring and evaluation (and the choice of methods) can enhance relationships and energise and inspire both participants and practitioners.
8. Evaluation can demonstrate the 'Return on Investment' of OD
9. Evaluation feedback can be used to acknowledge and celebrate change efforts.

[12] This list is based on Finney, Liz and Carol Jefkins (2009) Best practice in OD evaluation: Understanding the impact of organisational development, Horsham, Surrey: Roffey Park, pp43-50 and Burke, W. Warner (1994) Organization Development: A process of learning and changing (Second Edition), Addison-Wesley OD Series, p171

10. Evaluation can help to develop OD as a discipline, adding to its credibility as an approach and to organisational understanding of what it can deliver.

Each of these areas of added value represents a powerful argument for, and a factor in, the design of, monitoring and evaluating OD.

Organisations need to carefully consider each of these areas of added value in order to develop a comprehensive approach to M&E that includes, but is not limited to, accountability for the use of resources.

Nevertheless there are some significant challenges to monitoring and evaluating organisational development and it is important to be aware of these in order to develop a conceptual framework that is both realistic and contextually relevant.

5.2. Challenges of monitoring and evaluating organisational development

It is worth saying at this point that monitoring and evaluation is a noticeably under-examined area of organisational development practice. Most books on organisational development skip over the issue (despite the fact that evaluation is an explicit stage in the OD cycle), giving scant advice to those who wish to take the issue seriously. This may be partly explained by the view of many OD practitioners that the systemic nature of OD makes it hard (some would say impossible) to evaluate. Indeed some writers on organisational development consider even the attempt to evaluate OD as pointless managerialist box-ticking.

Whilst the systems nature of organisational development does create real challenges for those wishing to monitor and evaluate OD activities, this is no reason to abandon the pursuit before even starting. The nature of organisations and organisational development does make monitoring and evaluation difficult but so does the complex nature of the programmes those organisations implement. Yet the NGO sector have – with some success – developed sophisticated ways of evaluating the complex nature of programme change. The sector is also experimenting with different approaches to M&E of partner and civil society sector capacity building - which represents organisational change in the context of partnership relationships.

Based on these two areas of experience we are in a relatively good position to address the challenges of monitoring and evaluating organisational development. However, we should acknowledge that evaluating organisational development is in its relative infancy and should modify our expectations accordingly. It is definitely a 'work in progress'.

One of the few systematic studies on evaluating organisational development was published by the Roffey Park Institute in 2009. The authors identified six main reasons why formal evaluation of OD may not take place:

1. The organisation may see it as a waste of time and other resources.
2. The organisation is focused on moving forward not looking back.
3. OD practitioners don't have the right expertise or enough guidance.
4. Evaluating in complex, emergent systems is problematic.
5. OD practitioners have little interest in, or appetite for, formal evaluation.
6. OD practitioners or organisations feel threatened by evaluation.

Of course, not all of these obstacles apply in the NGO sector but it is worth acknowledging that most do even if they are sometimes unspoken. Nevertheless, the external requirement to evaluate organisational development and the benefits of doing so provide a strong rationale for seeking ways of examining the value of OD and learning from OD experience.

Some of the challenges of evaluating OD are similar to those of evaluating programme activity – but more so! Among the major challenges are:

- Managing expectations – those calling for the evaluation may want to see quick and tangible results from OD and are reluctant to accept that there may be a time lag before results are seen and that it may be impossible to establish unequivocal proof of a causal relationship between the intervention and its effect.
- Overcoming scepticism, lack of trust or resistance from those involved – those participating in organisational change may not be happy about their experience and may question the motives of those asking about their experience. In addition, organisational culture in some organisations may not be conducive to open reflection.
- Finding ways to measure intangibles – many of the intended outcomes of organisational development initiatives may be difficult to describe.
- Dealing with emergence – most OD interventions develop a life and momentum of their own. Some of the most significant change brought about by an OD initiative may be unintended or simply unexpected. These

emergent changes may be very significant but may not be covered up by the success indicators that were planned at the outset.

- Accounting for intervening factors – it can be difficult to isolate the effects of OD from the many other factors that can influence change in organisations. This may lead some people to be unfairly critical of the evidence that OD did indeed bring about positive change. It can also lead to OD being credited with achievements that were brought about by other factors. The challenge here is to be aware of the other factors, open to the effects they may have had and require the 'good enough' standard of 'plausible association'.
- Working with limited resources – evaluations can be costly and time-consuming and require expertise that is absent or in short supply in an organisation. Evaluations can also be disruptive of normal working. Collecting and analysing data using some qualitative methods can be particularly resource-hungry.
- Political factors – evaluations have a political dimension and those involved in organisational change processes may feel under pressure, for example, to deliver a particular message or to avoid surfacing sensitive issues.

These challenges are undoubtedly outweighed by the benefits that monitoring and evaluating organisational development can bring to an organisation.

5.3. A conceptual framework for monitoring and evaluating organisational development and change

It is important for these challenges and the benefits discussed earlier to be placed in a broader conceptual framework for the M&E of OD. Without such a framework we believe that even the best methods may not be selected suitably or used successfully.

Table 3 is an initial attempt to outline such a framework.

Table 3: A conceptual framework for monitoring and evaluating OD						
	Stage in the OD process	**Focus of planning, monitoring and evaluation**	**Planning and design questions**	**Implementation and monitoring questions**	**Evaluation questions**	**Other considerations**
			Prompts to help thinking about what could be included when setting up each stage	Questions to help effective monitoring during the implementation of the work	Questions to help assess the extent to which the objectives of the OD activities have been achieved	Other issues to take into consideration
	0. Overall thinking behind the OD initiative	Identifying the range of potential OD initiatives that would be effective and appropriate to the context	Why do we want to invest in OD? What does the answer to the first question tell us about our understanding of OD? What kind of OD initiatives might be most effective and appropriate? What is our organisation's capacity to carry out/support an OD initiative?	Do we need to adapt our Theory of Change and its underlying assumptions about how OD activities lead to conservation impact?	Do we need to revise our Theory of Change and its underlying assumptions about how OD activities lead to conservation impact? How realistic was the assessment of our organisation's capacity to carry out/support the OD initiative?	Requires clarity of overall programme strategy. Requires a 'Theory of Change' to illustrate the linkages between OD activities and conservation impact.

Table 3: A conceptual framework for monitoring and evaluating OD						
	Stage in the OD process	**Focus of planning, monitoring and evaluation**	**Planning and design questions**	**Implementation and monitoring questions**	**Evaluation questions**	**Other considerations**
Baseline	1. Initial level of ambition and degree of achievement of the organisation's conservation impact.	Creating a baseline understanding of extent to which the organisation's conservation goals are being achieved in terms of conservation impact before the organisational development initiative begins. Creating a baseline understanding of the organisation's level of ambition for its organisational goals.	What is its current extent of conservation impact? To what extent is the organisation achieving its conservation goals? How ambitious are the organisation's conservation goals in the context of the country's conservation challenges and WWF network global priorities?	What does this baseline understanding of the organisation's level of achievement of its organisational goals say about its ambition and its organisational capacity?	What did this baseline understanding of the organisation's level of achievement of its organisational goals say about its ambition and its organisational capacity?	Requires evidence of achievement of conservation goals therefore it is dependent on an effective programme M&E system. Requires a clearly stated organisational strategy and/or vision of the future.

Table 3: A conceptual framework for monitoring and evaluating OD						
	Stage in the OD process	**Focus of planning, monitoring and evaluation**	**Planning and design questions**	**Implementation and monitoring questions**	**Evaluation questions**	**Other considerations**
Needs assessment	2. Organisational development needs	An assessment of the organisation's strengths and weaker areas. An assessment of the organisational development needs of the organisation. Creating a baseline against which subsequent organisational development/ change can be assessed.	What is the current level of organisational capacity to set and achieve conservation goals (as established in the organisation's strategy)? What are the existing organisational strengths that can be further developed? What does the organisation need in order to be able to set and achieve its conservation goals? What are the most appropriate instruments and processes to use in order to assess these? Who should be involved in the assessment? In what areas does the organisation need to develop and change?	Is the assessment process going according to plan? Are we gaining the participation of those we intended to engage? Are our communications about this process, clearly targeted and timely? Are stakeholders' expectations being managed appropriately?	How effective and appropriate was the organisational assessment framework, instruments and process? Were all the right people involved in the assessment process? Were the correct organisational development needs identified? Did the OA process *in itself,* contribute in any way to strengthening capacity?	Requires a clearly stated organisational strategy. Requires a systematic and holistic organisational assessment framework that may not be agreed across the network. Requires expertise to design and use instruments to diagnose organisational needs. Requires in-depth understanding of the organisation, its culture and working context (including stakeholder expectations). Qualitative methods such as interviews, group discussions can improve the completion of the organisational assessment.

Table 3: A conceptual framework for monitoring and evaluating OD						
	Stage in the OD process	Focus of planning, monitoring and evaluation	Planning and design questions	Implementation and monitoring questions	Evaluation questions	Other considerations
Planning	3. OD plan	Producing a relevant, high-quality, comprehensive and realistic OD plan.	Is there clarity about how the OD needs will be prioritised and phased? Is there scope to include a strengths-based dimension? Is there clarity about who is involved in decisions about the plan? Does the plan include: • A clear timeframe? • A menu of potential OD methods? • Sources and costs of OD support? • Milestone indicators if relevant?	What is in the OD plan? How effectively do the planned activities address the organisational development needs? Is the plan flexible and will it be responsive to newly emerging OD needs? To what extent is the OD plan facilitating a strengths-based approach? Are the OD objectives clear? Does the plan reflect current understanding of good practice in OD? Is the plan realistic given the level of organisation's 'maturity' and capacity? Does the organisation have access to the support it needs to implement the plan? Is the OD plan realistic in terms of resource requirements and timescale? Is the OD plan 'owned' and understood adequately in the organisation? How could the plan be improved?	Did the OD plan cover the right issues? Were the OD objectives clear? How effectively did the plan address the organisational development needs? Was the plan realistic given the level of organisation's 'maturity' and capacity? Was the OD plan realistic in terms of resource requirements and timescale? Was the OD plan 'owned' and understood adequately in the organisation?	Would benefit from a Theory of Change for organisational development with clearly articulated assumptions and realistic expectations of what organisational development activities can achieve.

Table 3: A conceptual framework for monitoring and evaluating OD						
	Stage in the OD process	Focus of planning, monitoring and evaluation	Planning and design questions	Implementation and monitoring questions	Evaluation questions	Other considerations
Inputs	4. Inputs / Resources	Availability of necessary and suitable resources (including skills and knowledge) to implement the OD plan.	Is there a realistic budget for the OD work? Are there sources of support from peer organisations? How can we tap into the strengths of some WWF partners to help the others? Is there a 'map' or 'scoping study' of potential sources of OD support? Are there dedicated staff assigned to accompany the implementation of the OD plan? If not, are there clear staff responsibilities for this work ? Is it clear who will be leading this work?	Are the resources being used in the way that was intended? Are we accessing all possible sources of support? Are the levels of support adequate for the implementation of the OD plan?	Was the plan suitably resourced? Did the organisation have access to the support it needed to implement the OD plan? What resources would have been useful?	Assumes knowledge of potential sources of support and other resources.

Table 3: A conceptual framework for monitoring and evaluating OD						
	Stage in the OD process	Focus of planning, monitoring and evaluation	Planning and design questions	Implementation and monitoring questions	Evaluation questions	Other considerations
Activities	5. Activities / implementation	Which activities that were included in the OD plan were actually implemented? An assessment of the quality of the activities implemented. What unplanned organisational development activities were conducted.	How are we operationalising the OD plans? (e.g. what kind of work/activity planning will we use?) Do we have any kind of quality assurance methods in place? Are we clear on how we will decide about responding to emerging support needs during the lifetime of the OD work?	What organisational development activities were carried out and with whom? Were all the planned organisational development activities carried out? How well-organised and implemented were the activities? What were the implementation challenges and how were these overcome?	Were the OD activities that were carried out the 'right things to do'? Was there a match between the desired organisational changes and the type of OD activities used? If certain planned activities did not occur, why was this? If certain unplanned activities took place, why was this? Did the activities undertaken reflect good practice and current knowledge?	Requires good quality documentation and recording of the activities that took place.

Table 3: A conceptual framework for monitoring and evaluating OD						
	Stage in the OD process	Focus of planning, monitoring and evaluation	Planning and design questions	Implementation and monitoring questions	Evaluation questions	Other considerations
Outputs	6. Outputs	The immediate products/deliverables of the OD activities on those directly involved e.g. new systems in place, numbers of staff trained, number of coaching sessions, etc. The immediate response to the products/deliverables by those who participated in the events or were affected by them.	Not applicable	What immediate effects of the OD activities can be seen? Did the expected numbers/targeted participants/individuals participate in the activities? What products/deliverables have been delivered?	Did the activities lead to the intended immediate outputs? If there were other unexpected or unintended outputs what were they and why did they occur? What levels of satisfaction were expressed about the activities?	'Easy to measure' outputs such as number of people trained may be used as a proxy for organisational change without examining in enough detail the effects of the activity on those involved. WWF's use of the term 'deliverable' may encourage a skewed approach to what represents success in OD.
Outcome	7.a Short-term Outcomes	Examines the short-term effects of the organisational development activities. This may be at the level of an individual knowledge, attitudes and behaviours; team relationships; or organisational systems, structures, policies, etc.	Not applicable	What have been the planned short-term outcomes of the OD activities? What other organisational changes are we observing that we think are an effect of the OD activities?	Did the OD activities lead to the intended short-term outcomes in the organisation? What unintended and unexpected changes have occurred? What evidence is there that these changes can be attributed to the organisational development activities? What other factors influenced the changes (intended and unintended) that occurred?	Easy to overlook intangible outcomes such as improvements in relationships or changes in ways of working. Qualitative methods are good at picking up on these. May be difficult to identify significant shifts in power relationships because of their sensitivity. Qualitative methods are good at picking up on this type of issue.

Table 3: A conceptual framework for monitoring and evaluating OD						
	Stage in the OD process	Focus of planning, monitoring and evaluation	Planning and design questions	Implementation and monitoring questions	Evaluation questions	Other considerations
Outcome	7.b Long-term Outcomes	Examines the effects of the organisational development activities on the organisation's ability to achieve its programme goals.	Not applicable	What have been the longer term organisational changes? Are these what were planned? How are these contributing (or not) to improved quality of programme implementation? What other (unexpected, unintended) longer term organisational changes are happening? Can we build on these?	To what extent were the planned longer term organisational changes achieved? What unintended and unexpected organisational changes occurred? What evidence is there that these changes can be attributed to the organisational development activities? What evidence is there that these changes are being sustained? What organisational development activities were particularly significant and influential? How, if at all, is the programme benefiting from these longer term organisational changes? (e.g. increases in effectiveness and efficiency in programme implementation)	How 'long' is 'long-term'? Some organisational changes such as organisational culture change may take years. Need to consider how (in the light of experience) the organisational assessment conceptual framework could be improved.

Table 3: A conceptual framework for monitoring and evaluating OD						
	Stage in the OD process	Focus of planning, monitoring and evaluation	Planning and design questions	Implementation and monitoring questions	Evaluation questions	Other considerations
Impact	8. Impact	The degree to which the organisation's programme goals are being achieved after the organisational development activities. The organisation's conservation impact.	Not applicable	How effectively is the organisation achieving its programme goals? What is the organisation's programme impact? What other changes have occurred in the areas that are the focus of the organisation's programme activities?	What difference is there between the organisation's achievement of its programme goals before and after the OD activities? What effects did the organisational development activities have on the organisation's impact? What effects have any changes in the organisation's ability to achieve its programme goals had on its levels of confidence, ambition, external profile and relationships?	Requires evidence of achievement of programme goals so dependent on an effective programme M&E system. Qualitative methods can be particularly useful when gathering evidence from stakeholders of the changes they have noticed in the organisation's ways of working and its effectiveness. Given other possible intervening factors, it may not be possible to establish direct causality between the OD intervention and any improvement in the achievement of programme goals.

6. QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE METHODS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In this section we examine the characteristics of qualitative evaluation methods and how they can be applied to the monitoring and evaluation of organisational development. We also focus on the under-examined practical challenges, and the associated costs, of analysing qualitative data.

Although the focus of this study is the use of qualitative methods for evaluating OD it is important to acknowledge that quantitative methods also have critical part to play in every monitoring and evaluation system. Indeed, certain organisational standards may require the use of quantitative indicators that imply the use of data that can be gathered only (or mainly) using quantitative methods.

6.1. Quantitative methods

Quantitative methods are used to collect data that can be analysed in a numerical form. Quantitative methods are those that allow things to be measured or counted, or ask questions in such a way that the answers can be readily coded and analysed (often statistically).

In the field of organisational development, organisational assessment (OA) tools are often used to carry out a systematic assessment of an organisation's capacities. Many organisation assessment tools use a quantitative approach, requiring respondents to score organisational capacities on each area covered by the tool, ranging from internal communications to the ability to influence government policy.

Another frequently used quantitative method used for monitoring and evaluating OD is surveys, though surveys can also include open-ended questions which invite narrative responses. Sometimes 'off the peg' quantitative tools can be used, e.g. tools that have been devised to assess culture and cultural change e.g. the Quality Improvement Implementation Survey or Hofstede's Organisational Culture Questionnaire, or tools that are devised in-house.

6.2. Qualitative methods

Qualitative methods include for example, Outcome Mapping, Most Significant Change, and Appreciative Inquiry. Qualitative tools include interviews, group discussions, written narratives, oral story-telling, and graphical methods such as Rich Pictures and Timelines. Less familiar methods include analysis of existing texts including email, participant observation, photo elicitation, and video.

Some methods such as Most Significant Change and Outcome Mapping use a combination of qualitative tools (and some quantitative analysis techniques) in a specific way to create a rich understanding of the programme or activity being evaluated.

6.3. Comparison of quantitative and qualitative methods

Table 4 illustrates the different purposes, uses, and underlying values that distinguish qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods[13].

[13] *Dobrovolny, J.L., Fuentes, S.C.G. (2008). Quantitative versus qualitative evaluation. Performance Improvement, 47(4), 7-14. DOI: 10.1002/pfi.197*

Table 4 : Comparison of qualitative versus quantitative methods	
Quantitative Methods	Quantitative Methods
Seek to validate whether a particular assumption (or hypothesis) is true for a given context.	Seek to validate whether a particular assumption (or hypothesis) is true for a given context.
Assume an objective reality that is relatively constant (positivist perspective).	Assume an objective reality that is relatively constant (positivist perspective).
Separate and detach the observer from the observed.	Separate and detach the observer from the observed.
Refer to the people who participate in the evaluation as respondents.	Refer to the people who participate in the evaluation as respondents.
Calculate sample sizes based on statistical power	Calculate sample sizes based on statistical power
Examine behaviour and other observable variables.	Examine behaviour and other observable variables.
Describe behaviours with numbers.	Describe behaviours with numbers.
Analyse social reality according to predefined variables.	Analyse social reality according to predefined variables.
Use preconceived concepts, theories and indicators to determine what data will be collected.	Use preconceived concepts, theories and indicators to determine what data will be collected.
Use statistical methods and inference to analyse data (e.g., chi square, ANOVA, regression techniques, and multivariate analysis).	Use statistical methods and inference to analyse data (e.g., chi square, ANOVA, regression techniques, and multivariate analysis).
Generalise findings from a sample to a defined population.	Generalise findings from a sample to a defined population.
Prepare impersonal, objective reports of findings; the final report typically contains charts, graphs, and tables that summarize the data.	Prepare impersonal, objective reports of findings; the final report typically contains charts, graphs, and tables that summarize the data.

Although methods should always serve the questions that are being asked, it is apparent from the table above that choosing to use qualitative in addition to or instead of quantitative approaches brings with it a number of assumptions around organisational culture, values and our understanding of what constitutes evidence or knowledge.

At this point it may be useful to clarify the language of 'philosophy, approaches, methods and tools'.

An '**approach**' is a position and set of values relating to the nature of knowledge and evidence, the value of participation, and the relative importance of meaning versus visible behaviour. For clarity, we have treated "qualitative" and "quantitative" as approaches. The decision to use a particular approach – or a combination of these – still requires you to decide what methods underpinned by those approaches will best serve the organisation's needs.

Methods (short for methodologies) are a way of doing evaluation. They are usually grounded in a particular approach, e.g. qualitative or quantitative. A method, e.g. Outcome Mapping, Stories of Change, etc. may have multiple components or **tools** within them.

When deciding which methods to adopt, many argue that it is not essential to adopt a single specified method – many organisations conduct very high quality M&E without limiting themselves to one method. However, some of the methods we describe are adopted as a way of embedding a particular culture, set of assumptions, language, and, sometimes, methods, in an organisation. Other methods are adopted as a way of addressing or rectifying particular gaps and biases in M&E which have been noticed across organisations.

A **tool** is a very specific way of collecting data – the same tool could be deployed within many different methodologies, and is not even restricted to a particular approach – a timeline could be conducted qualitatively or quantitatively, for example.

These three categories are not hard and fast, and people use the language differently, but it is a useful way of distinguishing between a way of eliciting information (a tool) and a more elaborate method takes a particular position in relation to the nature of knowledge, the importance of meaning, and the value of participation, and within which a number of tools are deployed.

Buried within discussions of the assumptions underpinning different approaches to M&E practitioners are debates on what constitutes 'evidence' or 'knowledge' (epistemology). When programme staff say "I know this is working because I have a gut feeling", they are using 'idiographic epistemology' – knowledge that is constructed by an individual. When a senior management team says "I know this is working because we have detected 20% improvement in employee scores on the annual organisational climate survey", they are using 'nomothetic' epistemology – generalisable knowledge that attempts to identify general laws. Finally, when staff sit in a workshop and discuss organisational culture, they are using 'hermeneutic epistemology': they are exploring what meaning a concept has for the group. It is these fundamental differences in what constitutes 'knowing' and 'evidence' that can lead to tussles over evaluation design. It can determine whether stories are perceived to be "just stories", or whether survey data is "just numbers". Often, either the need to be pragmatic, or the theory of what constitutes valid knowledge held by the most powerful voice wins out, but the advantage of the strong emphasis on mixed methods these days is that it now allows us to embrace each kind of knowledge, and deploy the kinds of information that is best suited to the needs of different evaluation users.

In addition to the *approaches* of qualitative and quantitative evaluation, there are three main **philosophies** underpinning the choice of methods in M&E generally.

The first philosophy is *managerialism*, where approaches from the private and public sector in relation to performance management, Value for Money (VfM) and cost effectiveness/Return on Investment (RoI) are brought into NGOs. Results Based Management (RBM) is an example of this philosophy where the emphasis is very often on 'objectivity' and 'measurement', with the accountability focus being towards donors.

The second philosophy is *science oriented*, where the emphasis is on translating knowledge into more general insights. The audience may well be peers in other organisations, or the academic community at large. This philosophy is where Randomised Control Trials (RCTs) and other quasi-experimental methods tend to be found, but it informs other methods too. Theory Based Evaluation and complexity based methods[14] such as Developmental Evaluation also sit within this philosophy.

The third philosophy is *beneficiary-oriented*. Unsurprisingly, this philosophy has been the most prevalent in international development, and the methods used place significant emphasis on the voice of the programme beneficiary. Accountability is focused on those who are intended to benefit from the intervention. In the context of OD, beneficiary oriented could be taken to mean, in the first instance, an orientation towards the staff in the organisation but ultimately (in terms of the impact of OD) the same beneficiaries that are supposed to benefit from programme interventions. Examples of methods underpinned by this kind of orientation include Rights Based methods, Utilisation Focused Evaluation, Participatory Rural Appraisal, Outcome Mapping and Appreciative Inquiry.

We have deliberately avoided differentiating these *philosophies* in terms of the *approach* they use, because qualitative and quantitative approaches can be used across different philosophies, even though the performance-based *managerialist* philosophy does emphasise quantitative methods rather more, and a *beneficiary-oriented* philosophy is often characterised by a qualitative approach. However, they do not correspond neatly – for example, there are moves to broaden the use of participatory statistics as a way of empowering evaluation participants in addition to generating information for senior management and donors[15][16], and similarly, linguistic analysis tools can be used to translate text based data into quantitative data.

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[14] *Starne, N. (2004).Theory-Based Evaluation and Types of Complexity, Evaluation, 10: 58-76, doi:10.1177/1356389004043135* http://evi.sagepub.com/content/10/1/58.full.pdf+html

[15] *Holland, J. (2013). Who counts? The Power of Participatory Statistics. Brighton: Practical Action Publishing..*https://www.ids.ac.uk/publication/who-counts-the-power-of-participatory-statistics

Whilst these the three philosophies described above apply to all monitoring and evaluation (including programme M&E), there are a number of conceptual frameworks (with associated philosophies) underpinning OD that also have a very important influence on thinking about organisational development. These were referred to earlier, and comprise:

- Systems theory
- Action research theory
- Change theories
- Social constructionism/appreciative inquiry
- Complexity theory

These five bodies of conceptual knowledge not only have important implications for OD practice, they are only recently being recognised as important factors in shaping the way in which OD is monitored and evaluated. What is very clear is that qualitative methods are essential for assessing OD initiatives that are guided by these conceptual frameworks.

6.4. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods

The relative strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative methods means that M&E frameworks commonly make use of a mix of both (though 'mixing' methods can also be used to describe the use of a range of methods within either of these categories).

Four reasons are often cited for using mixed methods:

- Illustration: using qualitative data to animate "dry" results, or using quantitative data to reduce density and provide focus
- Methodological strengthening: because all data collection methods have limitations, multiple methods can help to neutralise or cancel out some of these limitations.
- Analytic density: obtaining a wider and deeper picture of the situation
- Convergent validation: checking whether the findings of different methods agree. This is known as triangulation.

However, social scientists argue that the different ways of thinking about phenomena which underpin qualitative and quantitative approaches means that they rarely converge to deliver 'validity'. They argue that the most compelling rationale for using mixed methods is "analytic density" - to enable us to better explore complexity by taking different approaches to the evaluation question. Thus, a mixed method approach seeks to provide more nuanced information, and helps to clarify disparate results. This also helps 'subjugated' voices to be heard which can be masked or missing in quantitative findings.

A common challenge with the use of mixed methods is how to integrate and report them. Ideally, there should be a stage in the integration of results where the findings of each method are "put in dialogue" with each other. We therefore, need to ask the following four questions in order to ensure that the use of mixed methods is intentional and useful.

***1. Implementation*:** What sequence of (qualitative and quantitative) methods is used in the overall evaluation design?

Sequence implies using one method to elaborate on or expand the findings of another method. This may involve beginning with a qualitative method for exploratory purposes and following up with a quantitative method with a large sample so that the evaluator can generalise the results. Alternatively, the study may begin with a quantitative method in which theories or concepts are tested, to be followed by a qualitative method involving detailed exploration with a few cases or individuals. Concurrent procedures involve converting quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the evaluation question. In this design, the investigator collects both forms of data at the same time during the study and then integrates the information in the interpretation of the overall results.

***2. Priority*:** Which methods are most important in data analysis, particularly in influencing decisions when findings from different methods do not agree?

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[16] *Masset, E. (2014) Who counts what? Some observations on participatory statistics based on a review of 'Who counts? The power of participatory statistics', edited by J. Holland, Journal of Development Effectiveness, 6:3, 324-335, DOI: 10.1080/19439342.2014.941906* http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/19439342.2014.941906

An evaluation using mixed methods can give equal priority to both quantitative and qualitative approaches, emphasise qualitative more, or emphasise quantitative more. This emphasis may result from practical constraints of data collection, the need to understand one form of data before proceeding to the next, or the user preference for either quantitative or qualitative evaluation. In most cases, the decision probably rests on the comfort level of the evaluators and the organisation with one approach as opposed to the other.

***3. Integration*:** At what stage of the evaluation design are the data derived from the different methods put into relation with each other?

Integration might occur within the evaluation questions (e.g., both quantitative and qualitative questions are presented), within data collection (e.g., open-ended questions on a structured instrument), within data analysis (e.g., transforming qualitative themes into quantitative items or scales), or in interpretation

***4. Theoretical perspective*:** Is the theory informing the analysis explicit from the beginning or emergent during the process?

Relating this back to the monitoring and evaluation of OD, a compelling reason to use a mix of both qualitative and quantitative methods reason would be to address what are sometimes called the 'hard box' and the 'soft bubble' elements of organisational management. In a highly influential Harvard Business Review article[17], David Hurst argues that effective management must take account of both the 'hard boxes' and 'soft bubbles'.

The hard/soft categories can be readily applied to the McKinsey 7-S model (Figure 3) which is often used to focus organisational development activities (and, indeed, has been used by WWF Brazil for this purpose). Evaluating OD activities that focus on the 'hard' elements of the 7-S may be more amenable than we tend to think to the use qualitative methods. Likewise, although the 'soft' parts of the 7-S are likely to *require* the use of qualitative methods to examine organisational development change, this by no means rules out the use of quantitative methods.

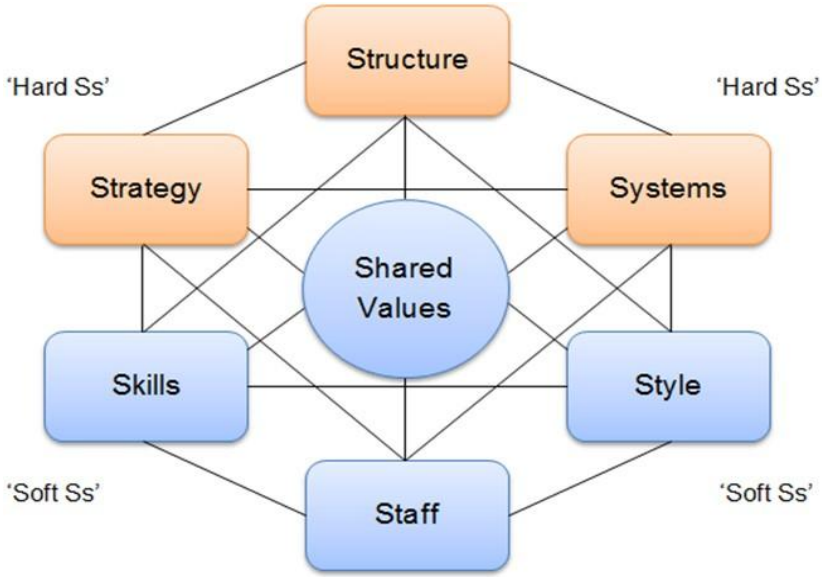

Figure 3: 'Hard box' and 'soft bubble' elements of organisations in the McKinsey 7-S model

In other words, evaluating OD interventions related to every organisational capacity area can best be addressed by using a mix of quantitative/qualitative methods. As one of the 'founding fathers' of OD, Warner Burke, explained:

> "I always do a combination of qualitative and quantitative. I don't think that one by itself gives you the full picture of what's going on. Interview data helps you to understand what the numbers are telling you."

The case for using both qualitative and quantitative methods in the M&E of organisational development is convincing. Both approaches have their strengths and weaknesses and each has its place depending on the focus and purpose of the evaluation but used in combination they can paint a picture that is richer than either could on its own.

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[17] *Hurst, David (1984) Of Boxes, Bubbles and Effective Management*

One commonly expressed concern about the use of qualitative methods is that the use of qualitative methods requires the development of qualitative indicators (see box Indicators). This is not necessarily the case. Sometimes qualitative methods can contribute richer/better quality evidence to existing quantitative indicators, e.g. Stories of Change from staff can be used to supplement the data from surveys that examine whether their managers who have been trained in leadership are actually applying new skills.

Indicators

Indicators can tell us things such as:

- To what extent our objectives have been met
- What progress our project or activity has made
- The extent to which our targets have been achieved
- That a change we are interested in is happening

However, indicators only provide an *indication* that something has happened – they are not proof and they cannot tell us:

- Why our program or project has made a difference
- Why and how change occurs
- How our communication activities should be undertaken

Indicators can be either *quantitative* – having to do with a quantity or number – or *qualitative* – having to do with the qualities or characteristics of what is being examined.

Quantitative indicators help to answer questions about things that are inherently expressed in numbers: How many? How often? How much?

Qualitative indicators help to demonstrate, describe or detect that something has happened: How? When? Who? Where? Which? What? Why?

In practice, methods are often combined or draw on each other to generate different types of data(see Table 5). For example, quantitative surveys can include open ended questions. Qualitative and quantitative methods can also support each other, both through a triangulation of findings and by building on each other (e.g. findings from a qualitative study can be used to guide the development of questions in a survey).

Table 5: Examples of the relationship between methods and the data they produce

		Data	
		Quantitative	Qualitative
Methods	Quantitative	A survey question using a five point scale.	A response to an open question in a survey.
	Qualitative	A focus group where people are asked to rank/score the importance of various changes.	A response to an open interview question.

So qualitative methods can be used to enrich evidence related to existing quantitative evaluation indicators, and vice versa (see Figure 4).

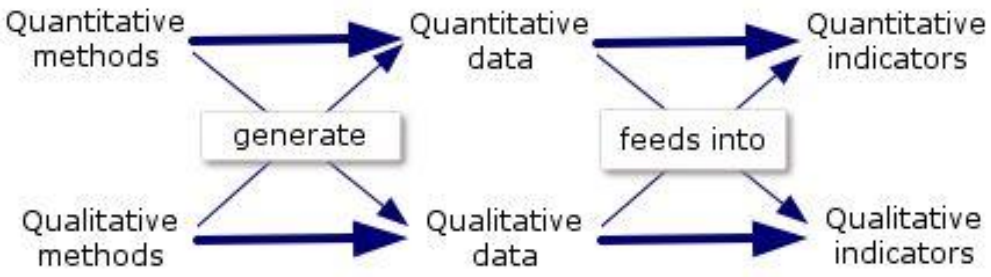

Figure 4: The relationships between methods, data and indicators

6.5. Qualitative data analysis

Regardless of which qualitative methods and tools are used, substantial quantities of material will be generated (that material may be in the form of audio recordings, text documents, video footage and perhaps even photos or drawings).

A remarkable gap in the literature which we examined on qualitative methods in M&E is that of the physical management and analysis of the data generated. This is by no means specific to the M&E of OD – a DFID-commissioned review of qualitative data analysis in evaluation commented that the analysis of qualitative data is especially weak, wasn't always reported, and even where it was analysed, did not use state-of-the-art designs and methods[18]

If qualitative data are to be used for learning and accountability, we must be able to place some trust in the quality of those data. A critical part of maintaining quality is a transparent and systematic analysis process.

High quality qualitative M&E should be defensible in design, rigorous in conduct, and should be credible[19].

The technical challenges of data analysis and how to address them are explored in detail in the document 'Compendium of qualitative methods for monitoring and evaluating Organisational Development' that accompanies this document.

It is worth noting that the use of qualitative methods requires:

- Commitment – qualitative methods can be time-consuming and may not, at least initially, sit comfortably with the organisation's culture
- Expertise – whilst some qualitative methods are relatively simple and undemanding to use, others require specialist expertise that may have to be brought in from outside the organisation until WWF builds its own expertise
- Investment – developing expertise and adequately resourcing data analysis both require financial investment

[18] *Stern, E., Stame, N., Mayne, J., Forss, K., Davies, R. and Befani, B. (2012). Broadening the range of designs and methods for impact evaluation: Report of a study commissioned by DFID.* *http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/Output/189575/Default.aspx*

[19] *Spencer, L, Ritchie, J., Lewis, J. and Dillon, L. (2003). Quality in Qualitative Evaluation: A framework for assessing research evidence. UK Government Chief Social Researcher's Office/National Centre for Social Research.* *http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/a_quality_framework_tcm6-38740.pdf*

7. What qualitative methods and approaches will be useful for monitoring and evaluating OD in INGOs?

As a key part of this study we conducted an in-depth examination and assessment of a number of qualitative methods and tools that we believed could be useful for NGOs to use for monitoring and evaluating OD.

The selection of the methods and tools we examined was guided in part by the terms of reference for the study and partly by our experience of working with INGOs. They are:

Methods include:

1. Stories of Change
2. Most Significant Change
3. Outcome Mapping
4. Appreciative Inquiry
5. Sensemaker®
6. Organisational Assessment*

Tools include:

1. Rich Pictures
2. Impact Grid
3. Timelines
4. Visioning

We also included Organisational Assessment which, although strictly speaking could be considered as a quantitative method, is often based on the use of qualitative methods and tools and is frequently used for assessing organisational change and development.

We examined each of these methods using the following headings:

- Short description of the method and its purpose.
- Relevance to organisational development and organisational change
- An illustrative example of the method – in the context of OD where we were able to identify one
- Process – how the method is used in practice
- Key considerations for using the method
- Advantages and limitations
- Where to look for resources

We also scored each method and tool using a set of 'usefulness criteria'. Our critical analysis of these qualitative methods and tools can be found in a separate document[20]

[20] *Compendium of qualitative methods for monitoring and evaluating Organisational Development*

8. KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR INGOS ARISING FROM THIS STUDY

In this section we suggest some key issues for INGOs to consider under two headings. The first set of considerations are more specific and relate to the use of qualitative methods in the M&E of organisational development. The second set of considerations are concerned with wider issues related to the context in which qualitative methods would be used, namely WWF's understanding of organisational development and how it can be evaluated.

8.1. Considerations concerning the use of qualitative methods in the M&E of organisational development

1. The use of qualitative methods significantly enhances an organisation's ability to identify and assess the outcomes and impact of OD activities. When used in conjunction with quantitative methods they can provide a rigorous and holistic understanding of the complex nature of organisational development.
2. INGOs need to be clear on the primary purposes for the M&E of OD in each OD initiative – reflection/learning or accountability (see Table 2) and choose a suitable mix of M&E methods. Some qualitative methods are excellent for facilitating shared reflection processes (which can strengthen adaptive management) whilst others are better suited to gather qualitative data for evidence/accountability purposes.
3. Whatever decision an INGO takes concerning the adoption and use of qualitative methods for M&E of OD, those involved will need to be able to convince colleagues that the time and effort involved is worthwhile. OD (and thus the M&E of OD) may be viewed as a distraction by many staff who would rather focus on what they see as their 'real' work – delivering programme change. Those staff are more likely to be convinced that their organisation's investment in OD will lead to a strengthened ability to achieve the organisation's goals if their INGO has a clear and comprehensive Theory of Change for OD.
4. Organisations can benefit from embracing more of an appreciative approach in monitoring and evaluating organisational development and change. An example of this would be starting each OD evaluation with 'discovery-type' questions to explore where positive changes have emerged. This could be used in parallel with more conventional monitoring or assessment against pre-established indicators.
5. Using qualitative methods to M&E requires a commitment to valuing the data and insights they generate. INGOs (especially those with a scientific background) need to ensure that they do not privilege quantitative over qualitative data simply because there is an underlying cultural belief that 'real science' and 'real management' involves numbers.
6. Qualitative methods necessitate particular ways of interacting with stakeholders. In this sense, all INGOs can benefit from demonstrating their genuine interest in stakeholders' stories. One way of demonstrating this is to be willing to invest in systematic data analysis to understand these stories more fully. Without this commitment to make good use of the stories, there is a real risk of undermining the implicit 'contract' that it is necessary to have with participants/stakeholders in order for them to feel safe in sharing their personal stories.
7. Using qualitative methods in OD requires a deep organisational commitment to learning because it is learning that provides the evidence to inform future organisational change processes.
8. INGOs need to have both the commitment and the resources to incorporate a learning dimension to strengthening the use of qualitative methods in the M&E of OD. One way of supporting this learning would be to use a Community of Practice on OD to share experience about the use of qualitative methods for monitoring, evaluating and learning from organisational development and change.

8.2. Wider considerations concerning our understanding of organisational development and how it is assessed

9. INGOs need to be ready and willing to embrace the 'messiness' of organisational development and change. By this we mean that NGOs will need to recognise that organisational development seldom follows a predictable, linear 'cause-effect' or 'design-and-build' path to bring about organisational change. This 'messiness' needs to be reflected in the organisation's Theory of Change for OD.
10. Whilst accountability is unquestionably a necessary purpose for the M&E of OD, it should be balanced with other purposes such as learning.
11. There is a real challenge in designing an M&E framework (including a Theory of Change) that incorporates the 'ultimate' link i.e. the connection with the achievement of *programmeimpact*. INGOs should consider working with a 'bottom up' solution e.g. each country office articulates the connection between OD and impact in a way that best reflects their situation, rather than try to establish one overarching organisational framework.
12. INGOs may find it useful to experiment with developing potential qualitative indicators and then testing them out in order to become accustomed to the different nature of qualitative indicators and the demands they make for data collection and analysis. This way of testing out and learning from qualitative indicators could be a useful step to help an organisation move out of its 'comfort zone' of using quantitative indicators.

9. List of Annexes

Annex One: List of Interviewees

Akinyi,	Rosemary	Senior Officer – People and Organisation Development	WWF Kenya
Barbosa,	Roger	Head, Design and Impact of Programmes and Projects	WWF Brazil
Bhalla,	Karan	Chief Operations Officer	WWF India
Bruno-VanVijfeijken,	Tosca Maria	Director, Transnational NGO Initiative	Maxwell Institute, Syracuse University
Cao,	Dan	Director, Strategic Management	WWF China
Crawford,	Clare	Head of Design & Impact	WWF UK
Douthwaite,	Boru	Principal Scientist at WorldFish	CGIAR
Eager,	Rachel	Deputy Head of Impact, Innovation and Evidence	Save the Children UK
Hempshall,	Keith	Organisational Development Portfolio Manager	WWF UK
James,	Rick	Principal Consultant	INTRAC
Kapaso,	Bevis	Interim Head of M&E	Action Aid International
Laurance,	Penny	Deputy Chief Executive	Oxfam GB
O'Connor,	Sheila	Senior Advisor, Conservation Strategy and Performance	WWF International
Pearson,	Jenny	Consultant	VBNK, Cambodia
Reeler,	Doug	Consultant	CDRA, South Africa
Simister,	Nigel	Independent Consultant & INTRAC Associate	INTRAC
Steenson,	Brian	Knowledge Management Advisor	Save the Children UK
Sterne,	Rod	Organisational Development Manager	WWF UK
Tynystanov,	Tendik	Performance and Accountability Manager	British Red Cross
Valenzuela,	Sandra	Planning & Development Director	WWF Colombia
Walkington,	Diane	Director of International Programmes Support	WWF UK

Annex Two: Resource List

Organisational Development

Bolman, Lee and Terrence Deal (2013) Reframing Organizations, Fifth Edition, San Francisco: Jossey Bass

Burke, W. Warner (1994) Organization Development: A Process of Learning and Changing, Reading, Massachusetts: Addison Wesley

Cheung-Judge, Mee-Yan and Linda Holbeche (2011) Organization Development, London: Kogan Page

Griffin, Ed, Mike Alsop, Martin Saville and Grahame Smith (2014) A Field Guide for Organisation Development, Farnham, England: Gower

OD Practitioner: The Journal of the Organization Development Network, Winter 2013 Special Issue: Advances in Dialogic OD.

Organisational Change

Clarke, Paul and Ben Ramalingam (2008) Organisational change in the humanitarian sector, London: ALNAP http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/7rha-ch2.pdf

Ramalingam, Ben (2013) Aid on the Edge of Chaos, Oxford University Press

Senge, Peter, et al (1999) The Dance of Change, London: Nicolas Brealey

Monitoring and Evaluating OD

Finney, Liz and Carol Jefkins (2009) Best practice in OD evaluation: Understanding the impact of organisational development, Horsham, Surrey: Roffey Park, pp43-50

Finney, Liz and Jo Hennessy (2014) Measuring and Evaluating OD: Return on Investment? in Griffin, Ed, Mike Alsop, Martin Saville and Grahame Smith (2014) A Field Guide for Organisation Development, Farnham, England: Gower

Patton, Michael Quinn (2008) Utilization-Focused Evaluation, London: Sage

Simister, Nigel with Rachel Smith (2010) Monitoring and Evaluating Capacity Building: Is it really that difficult? Praxis Paper 23, Oxford: INTRAC

Theory of Change

The theory of change community can be found at http://www.theoryofchange.org/

Qualitative Data Analysis

Some excellent advice on choice of CAQDAS software is available from the CAQDAS networking project at the University of Surrey (occasional free seminars also)
http://www.surrey.ac.uk/sociology/research/researchcentres/caqdas/

Miles, M.B., Huberman, A.M. and Saldaña (2013). Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook. London: Sage

Zaheer, K., Alesworth, N., Bajwa, N, and Birwani, Z. (2012). Community Based Vulnerability Assessment: Kharo Chan, Keti Bunder and Jiwani. WWF-Pakistan. http://www.wwfpak.org/ccap/pdf/050913_cbva.pdf Describes the use of Atlas-Ti to analyse the qualitative data generated by the project.

10. About the Authors

About Framework

Framework is a collective of independent consultants dedicated to strengthening organisations, networks, and social movements working for positive social change. Our aim is to help develop healthy civil society organisations in the UK and internationally. We do this by drawing on our 30-year history working worldwide with development, humanitarian and environmental organisations, applying our specialist knowledge of organisational development and management, and upholding our values of creativity, integrity, and connection. Framework has worked closely with WWF UK and some of its network partners on initiatives concerning partnership, organisational assessment, organisational learning and organisational development for over a decade. You can find out more at www.framework.org.uk

About the authors

Bruce Britton has been a Framework consultant since 1999. He is committed to helping civil society organisations recognise and apply their collective expertise, strengthen their adaptability and become more effective and resilient contributors to social and environmental change. He has a particular interest in organisational learning about which he has written a number of widely recognised articles.

A former Director of INTRAC, **Brenda Lipson** has been a member of the Framework collective since 2008. With a deep seated passion for supporting change-oriented organizations to truly realize their potential, she seeks to contribute her practical experience and knowledge of organizational management and capacity development strategies and processes. She is the co-author of a publication focused on the design and implementation of partner capacity building programmes.

Órla Cronin has been an independent consultant for 12 years, and joined Framework in 2013. She is a chartered research psychologist, with a particular interest in research and evaluation methods, particularly qualitative methodology and qualitative data analysis. She supports organisations to develop proportionate and insightful monitoring and evaluation systems in order to help them understand and amplify the difference they are making, and provides training in qualitative data analysis to organisations and individuals.

EXPLORING QUALITATIVE APPROACHES TO ASSESSING CHANGE IN ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

A 'think piece' commissioned by WWF UK

Bruce Britton, Brenda Lipson and Órla Cronin
www.framework.org.uk
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framework

Why we are here
To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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